not yet

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Summary

More than anything else, you wish you could redo it all.

You wish it so deeply that, even when the end comes...

Chapter 1: we all die

You are frozen, maybe, where you stood?

Not-really-Mookie tells you that you are bait, you're used up — nothing left for you to give, and you're right where we wanted you.

You want to say anything, really. But you realize, quite abruptly, you do not want to die at all. What use is self sacrifice? What use is dying for nothing at all?

Because, yes, there is always a hope for the future, the ones who make it out alive, and the ones who come after that — Chrysalis has been doomed since the start, as you know, as they know, as everybody with a goddamned brain knows, yes.

You wished you could stay with Mia. You wish and wish and wish for it, you'd only had a day and a half properly with her. Then she'd lost her memory, looked at you like a stranger, nothing but that. Like you confused her. It had made you ill. Sick to your stomach.

You tried not to throw up for her sake.

You wished you could have more time with Goggles, see even more of that person that had laid beneath in wait. You wish you could have appreciated her more, wasn't she so sweet. She was one of few that gave a shit about whatever happened to you. Until the very end, she'd been begging you to stay *safe*.

You felt bad you couldn't give her that, at least. Hopefully freedom made up for it.

And speaking of people who give a shit, *Pink*. She took you seriously, one of the few that had been good to you today. She kept you in the peripheral of her vision, making sure you weren't hurting too much. She didn't poke and prod at both metaphorical and real bruises. You wish you could've gotten to know her better before it all went downhill. You wish…

At least, you hope all that you did could give her more of a chance to live. She deserved it out of everyone.

Surviving… living…

You wished…

More than anything, it could all go away. Mookie is still talking, so you give her your biggest, worst grin. All your teeth are showing.

"I'm glad," You laugh. "at least I could be a fly— no, a *cockroach*, while I lived." To have diverted their gaze for a few moments, yes, even now… even now… you wish… Why did it have to be like this? Like this? Torturous? You should be getting out. You should be standing beside Mia, keeping her safe, because you can't trust the rest to do that for you.

Then why aren't you? 'Cause you wanted to be a hero? Go out in glory? Nothing about this is glorious. Nothing about this is *heroic*. It's only a long, drawn-out suicide. You're a coward, because being brave would mean being there with Mia. With Goggles, with everyone.

You wish you could redo all of this, if only for their sake. It's selfish. It's so selfish. You don't want to die at all, *not like this*, who would? If only you could get up. If only you could do anything. Coward. Coward, to the end. Cayman had been painfully right about you.

Everyone was right about you.

This is taking a while, so any moment now, and oh, was Magic really watching the whole time? That's lovely. That's just lovely. You can't go out without traumatizing someone else? Great going. Really. Really.

Any moment now!

Close the curtains on this scene, and the show will continue.

Of fucking course it does.

So you wish and wish and wish as many times that anything good comes to those unfortunate enough to have been cursed with caring about you.

Just in time,

the show will—

Chapter 2: cruel games

Chapter Summary

Aren't you supposed to be dead?

You wake up.

You do not think that's something that's supposed to happen, you know, *being dead and all.* That's like… kinda just, the thing that's meant to happen. You shouldn't see anything. Except, maybe, heaven? But. You don't think you wake up in Heaven. That'd be kinda weird.

No, actually… you're in May's bed. There's dried blood on your fingertips. Still the phantom taste of medicine in your mouth.

What.

You get to unsteady feet, tumbling over yourself like being upright is something you're unused to now. You can't believe it, so you dig your fingernails into your palms. If there is enough sensation, this illusion will surely fall apart — had you ended up in *Hell*?

You let yourself fall onto the ground, and it hurts. A hysterical sort of laugh escapes you. What the *fuck*?! What the hell was even going on anymore!!? You DIED!

It had been underwhelming, disappointing, loathsome, but you had died! *Died*! You had felt every moment of it, excruciating, exhilarating. You have an imagination, but it had felt so *real*, every single second of it. Not-really-Mookie had looked down on you, eyes aglow with nothing at all.

Your hands had itched, had ached, your heart had been pounding in your chest, and you could feel everything, the world was ending.

Your world was ending, at least.

Picking yourself up, you're shaking like a leaf. You'd be embarrassed if not for the remnants of mania; painfully, painfully real. Were you really just crazy, then? Imagining this in your last moments? There could be no other explanation, but if this were your brain, you couldn't even control it. Not like you could Wonderland, at least.

You breathe in.

Breathe out.

If you are alive, the day after you let yourself be shot by Fourbot, then… May's alive. Shan's alive. Cayman's alive.

If you can get a headstart. If you can just be *better*. Keeping everyone safe, because you'd failed embarrassingly before, really, it was kind of laughable you hadn't just killed yourself at that point, right? Assisted suicide doesn't count.

"Sidefall?"

Oh.

May returned? Is this what happens if you don't show her you're up and about and just stay put? Does she get worried? *About someone like you?*

You try not to have too emotional a reaction, but really, everything has been going on, everything has happened, you're tired. So, so, painfully *tired*.

"May," Your voice shatters, cracks into glass. There are tears in your eyes, you're still shaking. You hate it. Looking like this. Pathetic.

She frowns at you, takes in the slight change to the way you hold yourself, the lack of keeping yourself in check. You wish you could be what she was used to, but everything hurts and at the same time, feels so freeing.

"Are you.. okay?" Her eyes flick to meet your lone one. "You're crying." She tries to soften her voice, but you can tell she's unsure of if that's what she should do. You could care less about anything other than that she's *alive*.

"I'm fine— never better, actually!" And it's not a lie this time, how odd. "I'm so… I'm… you're gonna think I'm fucking crazy, May—"

"Aren't you?" It's a tease, and normally, you're just *fine* with it, but after the utter fucking *assault* this whole day had been, you recoil a bit from it. May notices, and so she moves past it easily. "Nevermind, uh, what are you talking about? Did something happen while I… yeah?"

She tilts her head at you with all the calm in the world, like she's expecting; expecting, what? You dunno. Probably something normal, at least. Did something happen?

"I- I mean it, like, really," You try to breathe. Just thinking about is elicits phantom pain in your *everywhere*. It hurts. It hurts. It Hurts.

"If I said like- like- that I just lived a lot of days? Would you believe that? Like- Like, if I said that I just died—" There's probably an easier way to explain all of this, but it fucking *hurts*. Like hell.

You can't focus, your gaze is going blurry from how much it hurts.

Ok. Guess you can't think about it too much. Whatever. Just don't think about it!

"…You *died*?" May repeats, blinking at you. "I, well, you're right in front of me?" She just kind of stares at you.

It makes you feel itchy. It reminds you of… K8-E looking at you every so often, disdain barely hidden, thinking little of you. Cain, who could've given less of a shit, happy to let you die keeping him safe and not much else. It reminds you of Nom's stupid and smug fucking face and everyone just lets him—

Huh. Why are you thinking about that? None of that matters! Everyone's alive! You just have to keep them alive, and nobody will look at you like that, treat you like that, in fact, maybe they'll even see! Without you having to fucking *spell it out* for them!

"Yeah, I know!" You try to laugh, but it hurts. You're crying.

You're crying?

Huh.

"Isn't this amazing?!" You lean forward, hands reaching for May's. She doesn't have time to pull back. "I can fix everything!" Even though she doesn't understand, can never understand, and isn't that for the better?

Speaking of fixing everything.

"…Don't bother, don't.. with K8-E, or that uh, that tin can Four-whatever— I can handle myself, okay, May?"

Give her a smile. All the world is watching this. All the world prays on your goddamned downfall. All the world awaits the end of this show with bated breath!

You ought to give them a good second showing.

That is, after all, just about all you're ever going to be good for.

"I *told* you I can work people, Sidefall." May argues. It cracks the smile on your face. "You can handle yourself? So can I! It doesn't have to be just you! It should *never* be just you!"

She clenches her fists.

You didn't realize just how much she gave a shit, huh.

"Well, it was just me!" It's hysterical, manic, the laugh that finally chokes itself out of you. "It's *BEEN* just me! But— listen, it, it— I don't want you to—"

May scoffs. "What? What could *possibly* have happened? I'm not stupid, Sidefall! I wouldn't just walk into my own death! I wouldn't be alone!"

You're already fucking this up.

Fuck.

"That's not what I'm saying, it isn't like that, I just don't want… I can't stand it, I can't, okay, May!?" Your body hurts. You clutch your stomach. Bile wants to rise up. You can't throw up. You can't throw up. You can't. It's fine! You're fine! Just ignore the ringing in your ears!

"It was…"

Ah.

You threw up all over the floor.

Awful. Horrific. Traumatic, and you're ALREADY traumatized! Hah! It was too much, too much, and it would only get worse from there, and your hands itch, itch, *itch*. Thinking nothing of you, the people around you, why the fuck should they care? You have the Showstoppers, so who cares? Oh! *Aaaand* they're dead! Not *their* problem!

Huh. You. Didn't realize you felt that resentful. Weird! You don't care! You want to save everyone in this city and keep everyone safe, right? You don't care how they feel about you. It's all for their sakes. You want to keep everyone safe.

Nobody ever wanted to give you that other than the Showstoppers. You didn't hate it before.

Why, why, *why* do you hate it now? It's getting in the way.

"I'm fine." You mutter to May, wiping bile from your mouth. "Just… forget it. We- *We*, okay? We. Will deal with those murderbots later! Together."

Just patch up the argument.

You need to focus.

May squints at you. With a sigh, she speaks.

"…Why do I actually believe that if anyone could do it, it'd be you, to go back in time?"

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